

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1709

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2003

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL'S
REMARKS ABOUT VIETNAM

SINGAPORE AND JAKARTA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY
INGERSOLL ONLY FROM AMBASSADOR

1. AT DIRECTION OF FOREIGN MINISTER, HIS DEPUTY, KY CALLED IN DCM THIS MORNING. KY HAD AP TICKER REPORT FROM KUALA LUMPUR DATED FEBRUARY 13 AS FOLLOWS: QTE THERE ARE STILL DAILY VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT BY BOTH THE COMMUNIST AND GOVERNMENT FORCES IN VIETNAM. THE US ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FAR EAST AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, ROBERT INGERSOLL, SAID WEDNESDAY. INGERSOLL, HERE FOR A DAY'S VISIT, TOLD NEWSMEN THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS URGED THE PARTIES CONCERNED IN VIETNAM TO ABIDE BY THE PEACE AGREEMENT SO AS TO ENSURE PEACE IN THE AREA. ON THE US DEFENSE COMMITMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, INGERSOLL SAID HIS COUNTRY WOULD MAKE NO FUTURE COMMITMENT THAN THAT ALREADY EXISTING IN THE REGION. ON THE NEUTRALIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AS PROPOSED BY MALAYSIA, INGERSOLL SAID THE TIME WAS NOT RIPE. MANY DIFFICULTIES, HE SAID, HAD TO BE OVERCOME BEFORE THE CONCEPT COULD BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED. INGERSOLL WAS HERE IN THE COURSE OF 14-NATION
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FACT FINDING TOUR OF THE FAR EAST. UNQTE

2. KY SAID THIS REPORT PUT HIS GOVERNMENT IN DIFFICULT SITUATION AND THEY HAVE SO FAR BEEN SAYING ONLY THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY ACTUALLY SAID. HE HOPED IT WOULD BE CLEAR THAT SOUTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY ACTIVITIES WERE LIMITED TO RESPONSE IN SELF-DEFENSE TO CONTINUED AGGRESSION BY OTHER SIDE.

3. WE INFORMED FONMIN THAT OBVIOUSLY YOU MUST HAVE BEEN MISQUOTED SINCE OFFICIAL POSITION OF USG REMAINED AS THE SECRETARY HAD MADE CLEAR THAT ALLEGATIONS OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE VIOLATIONS REPEATEDLY MADE BY HANOI WERE WITHOUT FOUNDATION AND THAT GVN WOULD NECESSARILY RESPOND TO MASSIVE VIOLATIONS OF OTHER SIDE.

4. WE WOULD EXPECT HANOI TO FULLY EXPLOIT THIS REPORTING OF THIS ALLEGED STATEMENT IN WAYS WHICH WILL BE DECIDEDLY UNHELPFUL. SINCE ANY COMMENT ON VIETNAM IS SUBJECT TO GROSS DISTORTION, HOPE THAT IN PRESS CONTACTS ON REST OF TRIP SUBJECT OF VIETNAM COULD BE AVOIDED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND THAT GREAT CARE BE TAKEN NOT TO PERMIT EVEN-HANDED TREATMENT OF GVN-PRC CONFLICT OVER PARACELS TO BE AUTOMATICALLY TRANSFERRED TO EVEN-HANDED EQUATION OF GVN AND PRG.
MARTIN

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DISSEMINATION PER MR. SARROS, S/S-O.

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